

British and the Austrians. The French forces too, however, were not homogeneous, and the number of desertions from the Italian and Croatian regiments, whose hearts were not in the fight, was very large. The Allies were assisted by an anti-French movement in Ragusa itself; but while the nobles and the peasantry desired the restoration of the Republic, the bourgeoisie still evinced French tendencies. The other Dalmatians wished to be under Austrian dominion.

The British fleet, as I have said, had occupied the Ragusan islands, where a provisional Government was set up under Ragusan nobles, and the old Ragusan laws were revived. With the capture of Stagno the whole country west of the Ombla rose in favour of the Anglo-Austrians, and Captain Lowen issued a proclamation to the Ragusans from Mezzo, declaring that "the English and Austrian forces were advancing towards this country to give it back its liberty. . . . Remember that you bear a glorious name, and fight as the Spaniards and the Russians have fought to restore your independence." The Austrian proclamation issued by General Hiller contained no mention of the word independence.

In the meanwhile the Ragusans Count Caboga and Marchese Bona raised a force of 3000 Canalesi; as this was not sufficient to recapture Ragusa, it became necessary to apply for British assistance. But no one wished to be the first to ask for it, as it was feared that if the British did seize Ragusa they might end by retaining it; while if they failed, the French would show no mercy on the rebels. At last it was agreed to send a popular deputation of twenty-five peasants to Captain Hoste, who was